

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 087627

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TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

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FOL REPEAT DAMASCUS 2183 ACTION SECSTATE APRIL 10, 1976

QUOTE

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 2183

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FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS PINT LE SY US

SUBJ: ASAD COMMENTS ON SECURITY FORCE PLANNING FOR LEBANON

REF: DAMASCUS 2180

1. DAUDI CALLED ME TO PRESIDENCY AT 2000L TO
CONVEY MESSAGE FROM ASAD CONCERNING PLANNING ABOUT SECURITY
FORCES FOR LEBANON AND LEBANESE RECONSTRUCTION. READING FROM HAND-
WRITTEN SHEET WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN
DICTATED TO HIM BY ASAD THIS AFTERNOON, DAUDI STATED:

QTE. WHAT SYRIA IS CONCERNED ABOUT AND WHAT IT IS SEEKING

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 087627

TO DO IS TO STOP THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON, TO PUT AN END TO THE

BLOODBATH AND TO THINK ABOUT A PRACTICAL FORMULA WHICH WOULD ASSURE THE CONTINUITY OF PEACE AND SECURITY. WE, THEREFORE, SEE THE PROBLEM AS FOLLOWS:

A. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE CONSTITUTION OF A JOINT FORCE CONTRIBUTED BY THE WARRING FACTIONS TO SAFEGUARD THE COUNTRY'S SECURITY COULD BE A PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENT. SHOULD SUCH A STEP BE TAKEN IT WOULD BE AT BEST NO MORE THAN A TRUCE LIABLE TO EXPLODE AT ANY MOMENT.

B. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE WARRING FACTIONS IN LEBANON WOULD AGREE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM TO ASSIST IN REBUILDING THE MILITARY AND POLICE FORCES. WE ALSO CONSIDER THAT THIS IDEA WILL NOT BE USEFUL AS REGARDS THE LEBANESE NATIONAL INTEREST.

C. AS FAR AS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON IS CONCERNED, WE WELCOME ANY FORMULA WHICH WILL HELP LEBANON RECONSTRUCT ITS ECONOMY.

D. SYRIAN OPINION COULD BE SUMMARIZED AS OUR READINESS TO RESPOND AND TO OFFER, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF OUR POSSIBILITIES, ANY ASSISTANCE WHICH MAY BE ASKED OR REQUIRED BY THE NEW PRESIDENT OF LEBANON.

E. CONCERNING POSSIBLE USG CONTACTS WITH THE PLO, THE PRESIDENT HAS NO OBJECTION. THE DECISION IS ONE FOR THE PLO AND THE USG TO MAKE. UNQTE.

2. I ASKED IF ASAD HAD DISCUSSED ANY OTHER WAY TO HELP ASSURE SHORT RUN SECURITY IN LEBANON, THAN THE IDEA WHICH AMBASSADOR BROWN HAD PROPOSED ON PERSONAL BASIS. DAUDI SAID MY QUESTION WAS EFFECTIVELY ANSWERED BY POINT IN PARA 1D ABOVE. HE THEN EXPANDED A BIT RECALLING OUR MESSAGE THAT THE THREE MARONITE LEADERS HAD NOT AGREED ON THE IDEA OF A JOINT SECURITY FORCE. WITH JAMAYYEL PRO, FRANJIE SCEPTICAL AND CHAMOUN OPPOSED, WE OURSELVES HAD SPOTTED THE DISUNITY WITHIN THE MARONITE CAMP. THERE WOULD PREDICTABLY BE ADDITIONAL AND CONFLICTING OPINIONS ON THE PART OF OTHER LEBANESE FACTIONS. "YOU MIGHT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 087627

CONVINCE THEM TO DO SOMETHING TODAY THAT WOULD ONLY BREAK DOWN TOMORROW. IT IS BETTER TO AVOID CREATING ANY STRUCTURE WHICH CARRIES WITHIN ITSELF A GREAT RISK OF TRIGGERING RENEWED FIGHTING."

3. IN A FURTHER GLOSS ON ASAD'S MESSAGE, DAUDI SAID THAT SYRIA CONSIDERED IT ESSENTIAL THAT ALL PARTIES NOW AWAIT THE ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT IN LEBANON AND HIS REQUESTS

FOR ASSISTANCE BE IT IN THE FIELDS OF RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SECURITY FORCE OR OF THE ECONOMY. AS FAR AS SYRIA IS CONCERNED, "DAMASCUS HAS BEEN PLAYING A TEMPORARY ROLE IN AN EFFORT TO BE HELPFUL. IT WILL NOT GET IN TOO DEEP."

4. ASKED DAUDI HOW WIDELY YOUR MESSAGES CONCERNING LEBANON HAD BEEN SHARED BY ASAD. HE REPLIED THAT TO BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE THE FULL TEXTS HAD BEEN SEEN BY ONLY THREE MEN, THE PRESIDENT, HIS TRANSLATOR (ASAD ELIAS) AND HIMSELF, DAUDI. HE DID NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT ASAD HAD MENTIONED TO KHADDAM IN GENERAL TERMS THAT HE WAS HAVING AN EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES WITH YOU ABOUT LEBANON. BUT HE DOUBTED THAT EVEN KHADDAM HAD HAD ACCESS TO DETAILED TEXTS. THANKED HIM FOR THIS CLARIFICATION. SAID I HAD NOT DISCUSSED THEM WITH ANY SYRIAN OTHER THAN HIMSELF AND WOULD NOT DO SO. NOTED I KNEW YOU WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING HOW CLOSELY YOUR MESSAGES HAD BEEN HELD BY ASAD.

5. COMMENT. ASAD'S MESSAGE CARRIES STRONG IMPLICATION THAT HE EXPECTS NEW PRESIDENT OF LEBANON TO OPPOSE ANY BUT SYRIAN INPUT IN THE SECURITY FIELD IF OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED. IN THE SHORT RUN, I WOULD JUDGE BASED ON THE MESSAGE THAT HE INTENDS CONTINUE PLAY ACTIVE ROLE ASSURING CONTINUANCE OF CEASEFIRE. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING MESSAGE REPORTS DAO DAMASCUS OBSERVATION TONIGHT THAT ADDITIONAL FORCES ARE RIGHT NOW (2200L) TRANSITTING DAMASCUS ENROUTE TO THE BORDER. THEY INCLUDE LARGE NUMBER OF TANKS. MURPHY

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